



## Aruba to host the Caribbean Marketplace 2007

Visiting officers of CHA, the Caribbean Hotel Association were in Aruba to announce that Aruba has been chosen as the venue for the next Caribbean Marketplace, the “Olympics” of tourism conventions for the region. Berthia Parle, President of CHA and Alec Sanguinetti, Director General conducted a press conference on Tuesday afternoon along with President and CEO of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) Jorge Pesquera, with Minister of Tourism and Transportation Edison Briesen and Director of the Aruba Tourism Authority, (ATA) Myrna Jansen, present.

The Caribbean Hotel Association is a federation of thirty-six national hotel associations similar to AHATA. It encompasses 900 member hotels from Bermuda in the north to Guyana in the south. CHA also has 600 allied members including airlines, tour wholesalers, ad agencies, travel agents, hotel and restaurant suppliers and many more involved in the hospitality industry.

The Caribbean Market Place 2007 is celebrating its 28<sup>th</sup> year and will take place January 14 to 16, 2007. It is the largest trade show that showcases the Caribbean and is considered the most important tourism marketing event of the year. It is expected to attract nearly 400 supplier companies who will present their travel product to close to 900 buyers from 200 organizations, and bring over 1600 attendees and international press from thirty-five countries to the island for the event.

CHA President Berthia Parle informed the press that CHA “is extremely pleased to come back to Aruba after a fifteen year hiatus; the commitment and professionalism shown by AHATA, the host association, as well as the strong support from the Ministry of Tourism and the ATA will ensure a highly successful event. They decision to select Aruba as the venue for 2007 was immediate and unanimous.”

Director General Alec Sanguinetti acknowledged the efforts of Ed Malone of AHATA, for “taking the ball and running with it the minute the opportunity became available. AHATA has arranged a great assembly of room blocks, funding support and other logistical arrangements. We are very comfortable that January’s Marketplace is going to be a record-breaking event.”

Jorge Pesquera of AHATA is very motivated by the hosting of the Marketplace and feels Aruba’s strong partnership of the public and private sector will make this a marketplace to remember. AHATA is ready to collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism to insure that this will be a successful event, and asserts that all those involved in the industry on the island will contribute to that success. “This is the perfect opportunity to re-launch the image of Aruba and prove to the world what a terrific destination it is; our famed hospitality will be our biggest selling point.” The detailed planning by a host committee of several government agencies is already hard at work planning all the activities of the event. Mr. Sanguinetti pointed out the years before, Cancun had done such an outstanding job of hosting they event that CHA returned for two consecutive years after. “Until that time Cancun was an unknown as a destination, the Caribbean Marketplace literally made their tourist industry.”

“The Government of Aruba fully supports this event,” stated Minister Briesen. “We will contribute extensively to guarantee that it becomes another success for Aruba, the local community, and the tourism industry. The conference will ensure that Aruba stays in the forefront of the international tourism industry.” This year the organizers will repeat the use of a giant marquee, which was successfully tested in Jamaica, providing on a temporary basis the venue needed of a size to accommodate all the participants. Eventstar in the United States, experts in this equipment, will provide the enormous tent and it is promised that it will be quite impressive. Three locations are being considered for the placement of the conference facility.

Jorge Pesquera also urged that all those involved in the tourism industry in Aruba be aware that this will be an opportunity to make them known internationally, and for their service to be recognized. Both Mr. Pesquera and marketplace organizers expressed the sentiment that they are certain that the natural warmth and hospitality of the Aruban people will win over the international media, dispelling the negative publicity of the past year. This major event will take months of preparation, and involves not only those that will be participating directly, but every vendor in Aruba, whether they offer tours, own restaurants or shops, or drive a taxi. The revenue generated by the event itself far outweighs the expense, and will continue to generate revenue long after. Mrs. Parle and Mr. Sanguinetti conceded that the CHA board would happily consider returning to Aruba depending on the success of this event, and other factors.

January 2007 in Aruba will start off with a major international event, which will offer benefits to the island for many years after, and organizers and members of AHATA and the ATA look forward to welcoming the international contingents to our island and showing them why Aruba is so popular with repeat visitors year after year.

